

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DDLHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6860

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KMEG

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC FOR PLAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2053

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, IN

SUBJECT: SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS:

THE TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

REF: NEW DELHI 1767

SUMMARY--SPECULATION ABOUT A POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS CONTINUES WHILE THE CHINESE TABLE TENNIS PLAYERS TAKE TWO TITLES IN CALCUTTA. THE CHINESE APPEAR TO BE ENCOURAGING SUCH TALK WHILE THE INDIAN OFFICIALS REMAIN VERY CAUTIOUS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CHINESE TABLE TENNIS TEAM HAS THUS FAR WON BOTH THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAM TITLES AT THE WORLD TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT IN
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CALCUTTA. COMPETITION

TION FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TITLES, IN WHICH CHINESE PLAYERS ARE FAVORED, BEGINS FEBRUARY 12.

2. AUGUST THE BACKGROUND OF THE CHINESE SUCCESSEE SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS CONTINUES. CHINESE SPOKESMEN APPEAR TO BE ABETTING SUCH SPECULATION WHILE

INDIAN OFFICIALS KEEP THEIR OWN COUNSEL AND WITHHOLD COMMENT. THE MOST RECENT CHINESE CONTRIBUTION IN THIS REGARD ARE TWO REFERENCES TO THE PRE-1962 POPULAR PROPAGANDA SLOGAN "HINDI-CHINI BHAI-BHAI" (LITERALLY, "HINDUSTANI-CHINESE BROTHERS). THE PRC EMBASSY "NESS FROM CHINA" PERIODICAL (NO. 8 DATED FEBRUARY 6) CARRIES A NCNA ITEM DATED IN CALCUTTA JANUARY 3 CITING THE

WARM WELCOME ARRANGED FOR THE CHINESE TEAM AT THE CALCUTTA AIRPORT AND THE "HINDI CHINI BHAI-BHAI" SLOGAN WHICH THE WELCOMERS CHANTED. ACCORDING TO DELHI'S PRESS FEBRUARY 12, A CHINESE JOURNALIST COVERING THE EVENT (PERMANENTLY STATIONED IN RAWALPINDI FOR NCNA) REPEATED THE SLOGAN AT A FEBRUARY 11 PRESS CONFERENCE IN CALCUTTA, SAID IT HAD BECOME A REALITY AS A RESULT OF THE CHINESE TEAM'S VISIT AND THAT IT WOULD BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED SINCE CHINA WAS EAGER TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH INDIA. IN COURSE OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE THE JOURNALIST (HSIA CHAO-LUNG) REPORTEDLY SAID THAT WITH A FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES THE NCNA WOULD OPEN A NEWS BUREAU IN DELHI.

3. THE CHINESE VICE MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND SPORTS CHAO CHENG-HUN

WAS BEEN TRYING OUT VARIOUS IDEAS IN THE INDIAN PRESS ABOUT THE CHINESE CONTINGENT'S PROGRAM AFTER CALCUTTA. UNI QUOTED HIM AS DECLARING THE CALCUTTA FEBRUARY 9 THAT HE WAS READY TO MEET PRIME MINISTER GANDHI "IF I AM INVITED." "SINCE WE ARE GUESTS WE ARE AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE HOST."

THE CHINESE MINISTER EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO SEE THE TAJ MAHAL (TWO HOURS FROM DELHI) WITH THE CRYPTIC COMMENT THAT "IT IS MORE EXCITING THAN WAR." HE CHARACTERIZED THE CHIEF MINISTER OF WEST BENGAL (WHO LEFT FOR CALCUTTA) AS

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CONSULTATIONS IN DELHI IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIVING CHAO FEBRUARY 5) AS A KIND-HEARTED GENTLEMAN WHOM HE HOPED TO SEE AGAIN. IN REPLY TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, HE SAID THAT HE HAD NO MESSAGE FOR THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER FROM THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS BUT "THERE ARE FRIENDLY EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES." ACCORDING TO CHAO, HE IS BRINGING HALF THE CHINESE CONTINGENT TO DELHI WHILE

OTHER HALF LEAVES FOR A TOUR OF SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA.

4. ASDLS ABOUT CHAO'S COMMENTS, THE PGW DESK OFFICER AT THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER FEBRUARY 12 THAT THEY WERE ESSENTIALLY ELICITED BY SOME CLEVER "HAVE YOU STOPPED BEATING YOUR WIFE" QUESTIONS PUT BY INDIAN JOURNALISTS. THE MEA OFFICIAL FURTHER SAID THAT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE THERE WAS NO CONSIDERATION PRESENTLY BEING GIVEN TO OPENING AN NCNA OFFICE IN DELHI OR AN INDIAN PRESS OFFICE IN PEKING. HE SAID HE HAD NO DETAILS OF THE CHINESE TAM'S PROGRAM IN DELHI. WITH REGARD TO THE CHINESE PRESS TREATMENT OF INZCA, HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOTICED A FALLING-OFF IN CHINESE CRITICISM (OR CHINESE REPLAY OF CRITICAL COMMENTS FROM THIRD-COUNTRY MEDIA) SINCE ABOUT THE PAST WEEK IN JANUARY BUT DECLINED TO DRAW ANY CONCLUSION FROM THIS.

5. IN A CONVERSATION IN DELHI FEBRUARY 11, EDITOR C.R.M. RAO OF THE INDIAN JOURNAL CHINA REPORT TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE ONE INDICATION HE HAD SEEN IN RECENT MONTHS OF A POSSIBLE WARMING TREND IN THE OFFICIAL CHINESE ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIA WAS THE INCREASED NUMBER OF VISAS GRANTED TO INDIAN VISITORS TO PEKING, INCLUDING SEVERAL INDIAN ACADEMICS RESIDENTS ABROAD AND SOME TOURISTS. REFLECTING THE ATTITUDE OF WATCHFUL-WAITING PREVALENT IN GOVERNMENT AND ACADEMIC CIRCLES HERE, RAO WAS RELUCTANT TO ATTACH ANY SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS POINT TO THE

DEVELOPMENTS IN CALCUTTA OR COMMENT OTHERWISE ON THE CURRENT PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT IMPROVING RELATIONS.

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